

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

- 1 1. A method for accessing an electronic commerce function, comprising:
2 transmitting, from a first network location, a first signal including information
3 identifying an entity and information identifying an electronic commerce function
4 associated with the entity;
5 receiving responsive to the transmitted first signal, at the first network location
6 and from a second network location, a second signal including information indicating
7 a selection of the electronic commerce function identified in the first signal; and
8 transmitting, from the first network location and responsive to the received
9 second signal, a third signal including information identifying a network address
10 associated with an electronic commerce application and information associated with
11 the entity;
12 wherein the transmitted third signal is operable to cause transmission of a
13 fourth signal to the second network location from a third network location, the fourth
14 signal including information associated with invoking the electronic commerce
15 function based upon the information associated with the entity included in the third
16 signal.
- 1 2. The method of claim 1, wherein the information associated with the entity
2 included in the transmitted third signal includes at least a portion of the information
3 identifying the entity included in the transmitted first signal.
- 1 3. The method of claim 1, wherein the third signal is transmitted to the second
2 network location, and further comprising:
3 further transmitting the third signal from the second network location to the
4 third network location;
5 wherein the fourth signal is transmitted responsive to the further transmitted
6 third signal.

1 4. The method of claim 1, further comprising:

2 transmitting, from the third network location and responsive to the transmitted
3 third signal, a fifth signal including a request for other information associated with the
4 entity; and

5 receiving, at the third network location, a sixth signal transmitted responsive to
6 the fifth signal and including the requested other information associated with the
7 entity;

8 wherein the fourth signal is transmitted subsequent to the receipt of the sixth
9 signal.

1 5. The method of claim 1, further comprising:

2 presenting the information identifying the entity and identifying the electronic
3 commerce function included in the transmitted first signal at the second network
4 location via a contact list user interface;

5 wherein the information identifying the entity is presented in association with
6 the information identifying the electronic commerce function; and

7 wherein the selection of the electronic commerce function is based upon the
8 presented information identifying the electronic commerce function.

1 6. The method of claim 5, wherein:

2 the information identifying an electronic commerce function associated with
3 the entity included in the transmitted first signal is first information identifying an
4 electronic commerce function associated with the entity;

5 the first signal includes second information identifying another function
6 associated with the entity;

7 the other function is one of an electronic commerce function, or another
8 function other than an electronic commerce function; and

9 the second information identifying the other function included in the
10 transmitted first signal is presented in association with the information identifying the
11 entity via the contact list user interface.

7. The method of claim 1, wherein the third signal does not include information identifying a network address associated with the entity.

8. The method of claim 1, further comprising:
presenting the information associated with invoking the electronic commerce function included in the transmitted fourth signal at the second network location via an electronic commerce user interface;
wherein the electronic commerce function is associated with at least one of electronic bill presentment and electronic payment.

9. The method of claim 8, wherein:
the second network location is associated with a user;
the electronic commerce function is associated with electronic bill presentment;
the presented information associated with invoking the electronic commerce function includes at least one of i) billing information associated with a bill from the entity for the user, ii) billing information associated with one or more past bills from the entity for the user, iii) billing information associated with a bill from the user for the entity, and iv) billing information associated with one or more past bills from the user for the entity; and
billing information includes one of i) summary billing information, and ii) bill detail information.

10. The method of claim 8, wherein:
the second network location is associated with a user;
if the electronic commerce function is associated with electronic bill presentment, the electronic commerce user interface is one of i) a biller activation user interface pre-populated with at least a portion of the information associated with the entity included in the transmitted third signal, and ii) an invoicing activation user interface pre-populated with at least a portion of the information associated with the entity included in the transmitted third signal; and
if the electronic commerce function is associated with electronic payment, the electronic commerce user interface is one of i) a payment request user interface pre-

11 populated with at least a portion of the information associated with the entity
12 included in the transmitted third signal, the pre-populated information identifying the
13 entity as a payee, ii) a pending payment request user interface associated with a
14 pending payment to the entity on behalf of the user, iii) a payment history user
15 interface associated with one or more prior payments to the entity on behalf of the
16 user, iv) a payee setup user interface pre-populated with at least of portion of the
17 information associated with the entity included in the transmitted third signal, and (v)
18 a request confirmation screen for presentation after submission of a payment
19 request.

1 11. The method of claim 1, wherein the second network location is associated
2 with a user, and further comprising:
3 storing contact information associated with the entity in a contact list
4 associated with the user; and
5 retrieving the stored contact information;
6 wherein the stored contact information includes the information identifying the
7 entity and information identifying the electronic commerce function;
8 wherein the information identifying the entity and information identifying the
9 electronic commerce function included in the transmitted first signal is at least a
10 portion of the retrieved contact information; and
11 wherein the contact list is stored at one of the first network location or another
12 network location other than the second network location.

1 12. The method of claim 11, wherein:
2 the user is one of a plurality of users;
3 the stored contact information includes at least one of i) private contact
4 information designated by the one user as information not available for access by at
5 least a portion of the plurality of users other than the one user, ii) public contact
6 information designated by the one user as information available for access by the
7 plurality of users, and iii) hidden contact information not received from the one user
8 and not available for access by any of the plurality of users;
9 the information identifying the entity included in the transmitted first signal
10 excludes hidden contact information; and

11 the information associated with the entity included in the transmitted third
12 signal includes hidden contact information.

1 13. The method of claim 12, further comprising:
2 receiving, at the first network location, a fifth signal including hidden contact
3 information associated with the entity, the fifth signal transmitted from a network
4 location associated with the electronic commerce application; and
5 storing the hidden contact information included in the received fifth signal in
6 the contact list.

1 14. A database on a storage medium for storing contact list information,
2 comprising:
3 first information identifying an entity; and
4 second information, stored in association with the first information, identifying
5 a network address of an electronic commerce service provider different than the
6 identified entity.

1 15. The database of claim 14, wherein the first information is other than
2 information identifying a network address associated with the entity.

1 16. A system for accessing an electronic commerce function, comprising:
2 a communications interface configured to (i) transmit to a remote network
3 location a first signal including information identifying an entity and information
4 identifying an electronic commerce function associated with the entity, (ii) receive a
5 second signal, transmitted responsive to the first signal and from the remote network
6 location, including information indicating a user selection of the electronic commerce
7 function identified in the first signal, and (iii) transmit a third signal including
8 information identifying a network address associated with an electronic commerce
9 application and information associated with the entity; and
10 a processor configured to cause the communications interface to transmit the
11 first signal, and to cause the communications interface to transmit the third signal
12 responsive to the receipt of the second signal;

13 wherein the transmitted third signal is operable to cause transmission of a
14 fourth signal to the remote network location from another network location, the fourth
15 signal including information associated with invoking the electronic commerce
16 function based upon the information associated with the entity included in the third
17 signal.

1 17. The system of claim 16, wherein:
2 the third signal is transmitted to the remote network location;
3 the remote network location further transmits the third signal to the other
4 network location; and
5 the fourth signal is transmitted responsive to the further transmitted third
6 signal.

1 18. The system of claim 16, wherein:
2 the third signal is transmitted to the other network location;
3 the other network location transmits, responsive to receipt of the third signal,
4 a fifth signal including a request for other information associated with the entity, and
5 receives a sixth signal including the requested other information associated with the
6 entity; and
7 the fourth signal is transmitted by the other network location responsive to
8 receipt of the sixth signal.

1 19. The system of claim 16, wherein the remote network location is associated with
2 one of a plurality of users, and further comprising:
3 a memory configured to store contact information associated with the entity in
4 a contact list associated with the one user;
5 wherein the information identifying the entity and information identifying the
6 electronic commerce function included in the transmitted first signal is presented to
7 the one user at the remote location, the information identifying the entity presented in
8 association with the information identifying the electronic commerce function via a
9 contact list user interface;
10 wherein the selection of the electronic commerce function is based upon the
11 presented information identifying the electronic commerce function;

12 wherein the stored contact information includes the information identifying the
13 entity and information identifying the electronic commerce function;

14 wherein the stored contact information includes at least one of i) private
15 contact information designated by the one user as information not available for
16 access by at least a portion of the plurality of users other than the one user, ii) public
17 contact information designated by the one user as information available for access
18 by the plurality of users, and iii) hidden contact information not received from the one
19 user and not available for access by any of the plurality of users;

20 wherein the information identifying the entity included in the transmitted first
21 signal excludes hidden contact information; and

22 wherein the information associated with the entity included in the transmitted
23 third signal includes hidden contact information.

1 20. The system of claim 16, wherein:

2 the transmitted information associated with invoking the electronic commerce
3 function is presented to a user at the remote network location via an electronic
4 commerce user interface pre-populated with at least a portion of the information
5 associated with the entity included in the transmitted third signal; and

6 the electronic commerce function is associated with at least one of electronic
7 bill presentment and electronic payment.

1 21. A method for accessing an electronic commerce function, comprising:

2 receiving a first signal at a first network location, the first signal transmitted
3 from a second network location and including information associated with an entity,
4 information identifying an electronic commerce function associated with the entity,
5 and information identifying a network address associated with an electronic
6 commerce application;

7 transmitting, from the first network location and responsive to the received first
8 signal, a second signal to the received network address, the second signal
9 requesting access to the electronic commerce function and including at least a
10 portion of the received information associated with the entity; and

11 receiving a third signal at the first network location, the third signal transmitted
12 from a third network location responsive to the transmitted second signal and

13 including information, based upon the information associated with the entity included
14 in the transmitted second signal, associated with invoking the electronic commerce
15 function.

1 22. The method of claim 21, further comprising:

2 displaying, at the first network location and based upon the received first
3 signal, information identifying the entity, information identifying the electronic
4 commerce function, and a link to access the electronic commerce function;

5 wherein the second signal is transmitted responsive to an activation of the
6 displayed link.

1 23. A system for accessing an electronic commerce function, comprising:

2 a memory configured to store information associated with an entity,
3 information identifying an electronic commerce function associated with the entity,
4 and information identifying a network address associated with an electronic
5 commerce application;

6 a communications interface configured to (i) receive a first signal requesting
7 access to at least a portion of the stored information, and (ii) transmit a second
8 signal; and

9 a processor configured to (i) retrieve, responsive to the receipt of the first
10 signal, the stored information, information identifying the electronic commerce
11 function, the stored information identifying the network address, and at least a
12 portion of the stored information associated with the entity, and (ii) cause the
13 communications interface to transmit the second signal;

14 wherein the transmitted second signal includes the retrieved information and
15 is operable at a network location to cause transmission of a third signal, the third
16 signal requesting access to the electronic commerce function and including at least a
17 portion of the information associated with the entity included in the transmitted
18 second signal; and

19 wherein the transmitted third signal is operable to cause transmission of a
20 fourth signal to the network location, the fourth signal including information
21 associated with invoking the electronic commerce function based upon the
22 information associated with the entity included in the transmitted third signal.